

THOMAS SUNDAY



Icon of Saint Thomas and Christ



PATRONAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH - BALTIMORE
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St. Ann Catholic Church: 1525 Oak Hill Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21742

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Next Liturgy: Saturday, May 6th, at 10am

DIVINE LITURGY - PATRONAGE CHURCH

Date	Time	Service	Intention
St. Thomas Sunday 4.16.2023	11:00am 11:15am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Intention: for the Health of Lisa Guba Requested by: Mike Skovran
Sunday of Myrrh-Bearers 4.23.2023	8:45am 9:00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Intention: in Memory of the +Kakalec Family – Eugene, Sr., Eugene, Jr., Elizabeth, & Paul Requested by: Michael Kakalec

This is **St. Thomas Sunday**.

The *Divine Liturgy During Pascha* booklets (includes the Propers) are located in the pews.

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen! Christós Voskrése! Voístinnu Voskrése!

CONFESSIO: Fr. Serhii is available 20 minutes before or immediately after Divine Liturgy. 1

GOD WITH US +ONLINE+: The next free virtual program entitled, *“Dedicated to Fellowship, Serving Christ in One Another,”* presented by Rev. Michael O’Loughlin & Mother Natalia, will take place **Wednesday, April 19th, from 8-9pm**. For more information and to register for this program, visit godwithusonline.org. You can also visit this website and click on “Ruthenian,” for weekly catechetical resources, including the Gospel summary and discussion questions that you can use in your catechesis at home.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY: Theosis in Action & the Eparchy of Passaic Present *“Poustini: An Evening of Encounter and Hospitality,”* in the light of the Byzantine East at St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, NJ. The next event will take place on **April 29th from 7-10pm**. **Additional monthly “Poustinia” dates at St. Mary’s Church have just been added – Saturday, May 20th from 7-10pm and Saturday, June 10th from 7-10pm.** These events are open to all young adults ages 18-35 – we encourage everyone in this age group to attend. For more information, contact: FatherTomByz@gmail.com or on facebook.com/theosisinaction.

2023 BYZANTEEN EPARCHIAL YOUTH RALLY: This year’s rally will take place on **Thursday, June 22nd – Sunday, June 25th** at the Carpathian Village in Cresco, PA. We are waiting on more details, but ByzanTeen Rally 2023 participants must be age 13 by November 1, 2023, and not have reached the age of 18 by June 27, 2023. You can find both the rally’s Teen and Chaperone Registration forms on the Eparchy’s website at eparchyofpassaic.com, click on “Youth and Young Adult Ministries,” then “Byzanteens Youth Ministry.” If you are interested in attending this rally, please let Fr. Serhii know so he can make sure you receive any updates that he receives. If you are enrolled in ECF, our church will cover the registration fee.

2023 EPARCHIAL ALTAR SERVER CONGRESS: Registration for this year’s Altar Server Congress, is now open! It will take place at the Carpathian Village, 802 Snow Hill Road, Cresco, PA, from Sunday, **July 16th - Thursday, July 20th**. Please visit eparchyofpassaic.com, click on “Youth and Young Adult Ministries,” then “Altar Server Congress,” for camper registration forms and further information. You can also contact Fr. Michael Salnický at 570-595-3265, if you have any further questions. Please let Fr. Serhii know as soon as possible, if you are interested in attending. If you are enrolled in ECF, our church will cover the registration fee.

METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY: Most Rev. William Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh, has invited all clergy and faithful to the Assembly of the Byzantine (Ruthenian) Metropolitan Church at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsboro, NJ, **November 2-5, 2023**. The theme of this Assembly is **“Living Our Faith, Moving Forward, Appreciating Our Past.”** More details forthcoming. You can sign up for email updates at www.eparchyofpassaic.com.

"Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'"

(John 20:19-31)

Sunday of the Apostle Thomas

Christ is Risen! Dear Brothers and Sisters!

After the Resurrection, Jesus Christ repeatedly appeared to His disciples, especially, when they had some need. He could enter even when the door of their house was locked. In our present, no matter what situation we find ourselves in, no matter what misfortunes we experience, we should not despair, but we can also hope in our Savior.

Christ convinced two disciples on the way to Emmaus, who at first did not recognize Him. He confirmed Thomas in faith, who doubted His Resurrection. He calmed the apostles when they, being afraid of the Jews, locked themselves in the upper room. He helped the disciples to catch fish in the Sea of Tiberias. Likewise, He will help us in all our needs, comfort us in sorrow, instruct us in hesitation, calm us in disagreements, if we will love Him, believe in Him, and hope in Him.

When the Lord appeared to His disciples for the first time on the day of His Resurrection, by God's providence, Thomas was not with them. When Thomas returned, the apostles, announcing great joy, began to tell him about the resurrected Lord, but these words seemed to Thomas to be fiction. He could not believe that Christ had risen and appeared to them here, in the house, and even with the door closed. This astonishment led to the fact that Thomas said, "...Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). And eight days after that, Jesus appeared to His disciples again. This time Thomas was with them. "Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side...'" (John 20: 27).

Embarrassed, Thomas, in awe, did not know what to do. His soul, which so desired to be convinced of the truth of Christ's Resurrection, suddenly received even more. The Lord Himself now addressed him, as if exposing him, "...do not be faithless but believing" (John 20:27). And now any doubt disappeared in his soul and heart, and he was filled with such joy that it caused Thomas to exclaim, "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 28)!

That is why the Holy Church calls the unbelief of Thomas "good unbelief. "Jesus said to him, 'You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe'" (John 20:29). This, dear brothers and sisters, is the greatest praise of faith. After all, our salvation depends on faith. Jesus Christ himself said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16).

"The basis of faith," Saint Macarius the Great teaches, "is spiritual poverty and immortal love for God." To be faithful to God, it is not enough to simply believe in His existence and call yourself a believer because of that. "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder," says the holy Apostle

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James (James 2:19). And Reverend Mark Podvizhnyk says, "Faith consists not only in being baptized in the name of Christ, but also in obeying His commandments." Reverend Ephrem Syrin adds, "The firmness of our faith is not revealed when we are served and we listen to words of praise, or when we endure suffering." Only a pure soul can be filled with sincere and pure faith, only such a soul can be faithful to God. Saint James the Apostle says, "...faith apart from works is barren" (James 2:20). "Faith that does not have good works," says Saint Simeon the New Theologian, "does not have God, who gives life to it, and is dead, since it does not acquire what Christ speaks about. "...If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). "This is in order to raise the soul from the dead by My visitation and to renew the one who is worthy to receive it. That is why such faith is dead for those who have it without good works."

Dear believers! Each of us aspires to follow salvation and achieve eternal bliss. There is not a single person who does not wish for this. But not everyone does everything possible to earn God's eternal benefits. In order to get warm, it is not important for us to know how the sun shines. Rather, we need to be under its beneficial rays. Similarly, in spiritual life, there is no need to look for an answer to the questions about where God comes from or whether He really exists. Rather, it is necessary to sincerely and firmly believe in Him, to fulfill His commandments, and to draw closer to Him with our holy life. Therefore, we should remember the words of St. John Chrysostom, "There is no benefit from a healthy faith in a corrupt life."

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MOTHER'S DAY COMMEMORATION: On May 14th, we will be remembering living and deceased mothers during Divine Liturgy. If you would like to include names for this commemoration, please complete the enclosed form, in this bulletin, and you can either place it in the offertory basket in the back of church, or mail it to the rectory.

GCU BYZANTINE FAMILY DAY AT KNOEBELS 2023: Join the GCU on June 11, 2023, from 11am – 9pm, for a family day at Knoebels Amusement Park in Elysburg, PA. The schedule of events for the day and discounted ticket books can be purchased at www.GCUUSA.com. You can call the GCU with questions regarding this event at 724-495-3400, ext. 3810.

2023 GCU BYZANTINE FAMILY DAY AT KENNYWOOD AMUSEMENT PARK – 101 YEARS: Join the GCU on Thursday, July 27, 2023 from 11am – 9pm for unforgettable fun. The park is located in West Mifflin, PA. For tickets, or more information, please contact the Fraternal Communications Department at 1-800-722-4428 X3927, or email mkullen@GCUusa.com. You can also visit the GCU's website – www.gcuusa.com.

HELP NEEDED: We have a bag of donated food, in the "Cry Room," that needs to be taken to a food pantry. Please let Fr. Serhii, know, if you can take care of this. Thank you!

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CHILDREN'S CORNER



Learn about Thomas. Fill in the blanks with the letters that come after the ones given.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Thomas was a _____ . When he heard that
 _____ c h r b h o k d
 Jesus was _____ from the _____ a _____, he could not
 _____ q h r d m _____ c d c
 _____ it! He _____ Jesus, but he had to
 _____ a d k h d u d _____ k n u d c
 _____ for himself that Jesus was _____ dead. When he
 _____ r d d _____ m n s
 _____ a _____ Jesus, Thomas said, "My _____ and my _____!"
 _____ r v _____ k n q c _____ f n c
 Thomas _____
 _____ a d k h d u d c
 Jesus wants us to believe _____ seeing! He
 _____ v h s g n t s
 Wants us to have _____ a _____
 _____ e h s g

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER: The people of Ukraine, that peace may be soon be restored to their land, our parishioners, the founders of our parish, our benefactors, those who are sick, and those who cannot make it to church. Also, Fr. Serhii, and his family, Marge Dulina, Mike Skovran, James DeWolfe, Clara Valeika, Caroline Belensky, Nancy Erdek, Kay Dinko, Doris Ruszin, Anne Gupman, Anna Martin, Joseph and Marie Repasi, Mary Jo Kelly Wilhelm, Georgianna Kostak, Sandra Suseck, Howard Guba, Lisa Guba, our first responders, and all military service men and women throughout the world.

*May our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician and Healer of souls and bodies,
 grant them peace and good health for many blessed years!*

STEWARDSHIP: (Donate at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=2346733> – the link is also on our website)

Patronage Church (April 2, 2023):

Offertory: \$1,525.00
 Tithe.ly: \$200.00
 Easter: \$100.00
 Easter Flowers: \$84.00

Patronage Church (April 9, 2023):

Amounts will be posted in next Sunday's bulletin.

Hagerstown Mission (April 2, 2023):

Tithe.ly: \$19.00

Hagerstown Mission (April 9, 2023):

Amounts will be posted in next Sunday's bulletin.

ST. THOMAS SUNDAY LUNCHEON/EASTER EGG HUNT: Please join us after Divine Liturgy today for our St. Thomas Sunday pot-luck luncheon followed by an Easter egg hunt. The GCU is sponsoring the Easter egg hunt for all children of our parish, and we thank them for their generosity.

THANK YOU: We want to thank everyone who helped prepare and set things up for Good Friday and Pascha from cleaning and changing the colored linens, setting the grave up, and displaying the flowers. Your efforts were greatly appreciated!

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH: We welcome all new visitors, to our parish family, and are happy you are joining us to share in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and hope you will become an active part of our parish community. If you would like to be added to our parish email list, send us an email at patronage.church@gmail.com.

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7).

Our Exodus, Our Passover

We have been released not from physical but from spiritual bondage. We have been freed not from earthly labor but from worldly defilement. Our flight has not been from Egyptian taskmasters, nor from a godless and savage tyrant who is nonetheless a human being like ourselves, but from wicked and unclean demons who urge us to sin and from their commander, who is Satan himself.

We have passed through the sea of this present life with its pleasures and idle distractions. We have eaten spiritual manna, the bread from heaven which gives life to the world. We have drunk water from the rock, for we have found our delight in the spiritual stream flowing from Christ. By the grace of holy baptism we have crossed the Jordan and entered the land promised to the saints and worthy of them, the land the Savior himself

spoke of when He said: "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the land."

Therefore, in honor of a new happening a new hymn should be sung by the Lord's kingdom, that is, by those subject to Him and governed by Him. A hymn should be sung, worthy praise should be given, not only in the land of the Jews but from one end of the earth to the other; in other words, everywhere in the world. Of old God was known in Judaea and His name was great only in Israel, but now that we have been called by Christ to the knowledge of the truth and His glory fills all heaven and earth, fulfilling the prophecy of the Psalmist: "The whole earth shall be full of his glory."

St. Cyril of Alexandria

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.ecpubs.com**